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THE FATAL CONQUEST.

A

POEM.

Occaſioned by the Death of the Brave

SIR RICHARD GREENVILLE,

In the Year 1591, after ſuſtaining, in the

REVENGE,

An Engliſh Man of War, a Fight of 15 Hours againſt

THE

SPANISH ARMADA

Of Fifty Three Sail.

WHITEHAVEN:

Printed and Sold by JOHN DUNN.

MDCCLXXII.

Whitehaven
123

1609/4481

THE

FATAL CONQUEST.

HIſtoric *Muſe* awake !---and from the ſhade,
Where, long forgotten, ſleep the noble dead,
Some worthy *chief* ſelect ! whoſe martial flame,
May rouſe *Britannia*'s ſons to love of fame !
If *Raleigh*'s Virtue, or the toils of *Drake*,
Nor can excite their zeal---nor courage wake !
Let *Greenville* riſe !---(yet ſtranger to the muſe)
New vigour lead, and double warmth infuſe !
And while her numbers make the *Hero* known,
Oh ! may they, happy, ſhare his fair renown !

'Twas in *Eliza*'s memorable reign,
When *Britain*'s Fleet, acknowledg'd, rul'd the Main,

When *Heav'n* and it repell'd from *Albion*'s ſhore
Spain's proud invaſion !---dreaded now no more !
Diſpers'd the *trophies* of her *giant pride*,
Loſt on the *rocks*, or whelm'd beneath the *tide*,
The fruitleſs menace, and vainglorious boaſt,
Return'd in thunders that deſtroy'd her coaſt ;
While *India*'s treaſures, intercepted, paid
A rich atonement for the wild bravade !

In theſe bleſt days---where to the diſtant eyes,
From ocean's lap*the green *Azores* riſe,
A cluſter'd heap amidſt the ambient ſeas
(*Iberia*'s then, now held by *Portugueze*)
It chanc'd to intercept their treaſur'd ore,
Howard's † nimble ſquadron ply'd the weſtern ſhore ;
But wavering fortune his deſign ſurvey'd,
Flatter'd his wiſhes firſt------and then betray'd.
The ſwift approaching pinnace bids him fly ;
And ſpeaks a vaſt *Iberian* navy nigh ;

Sudden

* The weſtern iſles, or *Azores*, lye almoſt in the mid channels, between the two great continents of the world.

† Ld *Tho. Howard*, brother to the E. of *Nottingham* ; his ſquadron conſiſted of ſix of the Queen's ſhips. 1. The *Defiance*, commanded by himſelf. 2. The *Revenge*, Sir *Rich. Greenville*. 3. The *Bonaventure*, *Craſs*. 4. The *Lyon*, *Fenner*. 5. The *Foreſight*, *Vavaſor*. And 6. The *Crane*, *Duffield*, with the *Raleigh-Tender*, *Thynne*, *and* 6 victuallers.

Sudden the news !---yet ſight confirms it true,
From *Corvo*'s cape the *Armada* roſe to view ‡
In ſwelling pomp, ſail following cloſe on ſail,
And the proud war advances on the gale.

The *Britiſh* chief beholds th' extending fleet,
Conſults his ſafety, and commands retreat;
Obedient to his flag, his ſhips unbind
The yielding ſail, and gain upon the wind!
Greenville alone, while others ſpeedy weigh'd,
With ſtubborn ſoul *reluctantly* obey'd;
Rejoic'd to meet the foe, altho' beſet,
And ſcorning every thought of mean retreat,
In vain the maſter counſels § time to ſeize
To cut the ſail, and ſnatch the fav'ring breeze,
The chief rejects the motion with diſdain,
Nor fears his *Engliſh* heart the force of *Spain!*
Fly from ſuch ſlaves !------that thought he ſoon
controul'd,
Rous'd, but not aw'd, their numbers to behold,

Warm

‡ *Corvo*, the weſtermoſt of the *Azores*.

§ Sir *Richard* was adviſed by the maſter to bear away, and truſt to his ſhip, which was a prime ſailer, but he refuſed to hear him.

Warm glows his cheek, he knits his ſteady brow,
And keeps his courſe, regardleſs of the foe.

As when a *Lyon-cub* in queſt of food,
Traces his ſire, the monarch of the wood,
But by a crew of ruſtic clowns beſet,
Is barr'd all proſpect of a ſafe retreat;
Stern he looks round, erects his brindled main,
His roar with terror ſtrikes the diſtant plain.
While timid ſwains, who dread his kindling rage,
Shrink as he moves, nor venture to engage.
So *Greenville* the aſtoniſh'd foes ſurvey,
And *one* by *one* decline to meet his way.
Obſerve his menace with confus'd affright,
And while they watch their friends---defer the fight.
Till proudly floating on the azure tide,
Advanc'd a huge *Galleon* in naval pride,
The *Great* St. *Philip* || with her cumb'rous ſail,
Hides the *Revenge*, and intercepts the gale;
The proud *Biſcayner* * next her ſails let fly
And each on either ſide their graplings ply;

Four

|| This ſhip was of 1500 tons, and by her Bulk becalmed Sir *Richard's* ſails, ſo that he could not ſteer the ſhip.
* This ſhip was commanded by *Brittandona.*

Four others next,---(ſo *cowards* preſumption learn)
Fix near the *prow*, or faſten at the *ſtern!*
On every ſide the ruſhing foes advance,
Roar cannons! glitter ſpears! and faulchions glance;
The mingled war augmented ſtrikes the eyes,
And with its wild uproar aſſails the ſkies!
Greenville beholds his ſhip involv'd in flame,
And vows to die, or vindicate *her name.* †
Meantime the foes from every quarter pour,
And ſhot and arrows fly!-----a deadly ſhow'r!
But check'd by *Greenville's* wrath ſoon ſlack their rage,
And loſe a while the ſtomach to engage.
His broadſide now ‡ the huge *St. Philip* felt,
A dire ſalute-----but ſeaſonably dealt:
She quits the hold ſhe can no longer keep,
Shifts her faint ſail---then founders in the deep;
The *Iberians* aw'd, her hapleſs fate ſurvey,
Dreading they ſhall obtain no eaſy prey,

While

† His ſhip called the *Revenge.*

‡ This ſhip having received the fire of the lower tier of the *Revenge,* charged with croſs-bar ſhot, foundered

While the *Revenge* now freed reloads her ſide,
Prepar'd to face the ſtorm ſhe muſt abide.

At laſt reſolv'd, (ſhame makes the fearful dare)
The *Spaniards* rally and renew the war!
From their ſurrounding ſhips new thunders deal
Return'd in thunders which too well they feel!
Thick flew their ſhots, all to one object borne,
With malice wing'd, return'd with mortal ſcorn.
Yet *Greenville*'s rigging gone, his veſſel gor'd,
The foes again encourag'd try to board:
And as the faint remains of day expir'd,
By fav'ring night, by hopes of conqueſt fir'd,
Thouſands advance, as ſoon compell'd------retreat,
Unable to ſuſtain the *Britiſh* heat;
While on the deck, conſpicuous to the view,
Firm *Greenville* ſtands, and cheers his valiant crew!
Exhorts---commends---new life to all imparts,
And with redoubled vigour fires their hearts:
By his example each a hero glows,
And copes undaunted with § unnumber'd foes!

Night

§ The *Spaniſh* ſhips that ſurrounded him were filled with ſoldiers, in ſome from two to five hundred, beſides ſailors

Night now prevailing had eclips'd the day,
The *Sun* in pity hid his bluſhing ray,
Fit emblem of the chief, whoſe ruddy beam
Of glory ſet------to riſe to future fame!
When, as unheeded thro' the foe it ſteer'd;
An *Engliſh* bark, || at *Greenville*'s ſtern appear'd,
Noble the Maſter's name------a *Briton* brave!
Loth in diſtreſs his *Admiral* to leave:
Yet, cruel fate! too impotent to aid,
He thus beſpeaks his leader undiſmay'd:
'Say, *Greenville*, ſay what office ſhall I do?
'My bark is helpleſs---but my heart is true!
'And muſt I, wretched, bear to *Britain*'s coaſt
'The fatal tidings------I beheld you loſt?
'Conſult your ſafety---(*Greenville* calm replies)
'Leave me to fate! for fate in proſpect lies!
'Fair blow the winds, and if they ſafe convey
'To *Albion*'s ſhores---tell, *Greenville* bid thee ſay,
'For her dear ſake I dare'd th' unequal ſtrife,
'Nor thought her fame dear-purchas'd with my life!

|| This ſhip was the *George*, Capt. *Noble* of *London*, one of the victuallers of the fleet.

The leſſening bark eſcapes! * the gloom of night,
With double horrors animates the fight;
While pale *Deſtruction* thro' the fiery glade
Delighted, views the havock *Death* has made!
Freſh ſhips advance!---† to grapple with a hoſt;
Courage is vain---and *reſolution* loſt!
What boots, if numbers are on numbers ſlain,
When foes, a countleſs multitude, remain?
Whoſe force combin'd the ſtrength of nature foils,
And makes the *Victor* weary of his toils!
What boot, *four* galleons ‡ whelm'd beneath the deep,
When *fifty* more renew'd invaſions keep;
Unceaſing rage, which endleſs aids ſupply,
While *Valour* ſees no refuge but to die!

Yet

* When night came on, the fight was renewed with greater vigour and obſtinacy on both ſides

† The enemy ſtill engaging with freſh ſhips, quite overpower'd and weakened the *Engliſh*.

‡ The enemy had 53 ſhips, of which they loſt 4 in the engagement. In this fleet were 10,000 men, whereas Sir *Richard* had not above 180 hands capable of doing duty. He was, during the fight which laſted 15 hours, boarded by 15 different ſhips, his ſhip received 800 ſhot, and was ſo diſabled that ſhe look'd like a wreck.

Yet e'en that *proſpect* quells unmanly fear,
Reſiſtance gains new ſpirits from *Deſpair*.
Like valiant *Hector* on *Scamander*'s plain,
When *Greece* defeated mourn'd her thouſands ſlain;
So *Greenville* thro' the duſk erects his head,
Known by the ſlaughter'd heaps around him ſpread,
When cruel *Fate*, § which doom'd his overthrow,
Wing'd to his mortal ſide the deadly blow!
While dreſs'd the wound------a ſecond ball ſhe ſent,
Aim'd at his head! and *in* the miſchief went;
Nor ſpar'd the *Surgeon* ‖ for his friendly art,
Kill'd he expires---the ſhot had pierc'd his heart.
Greenville thus wounded, every hope was vain,
Yet ſcorn'd his gen'rous ſoul to yield to *Spain!*
His *powder* ſpent, * his warriors thinn'd by death,
In gore embru'd---or faint for want of breath.
Full ninety ſick, who on the ballaſt lay,
Nor ſhar'd the fortune of the adverſe day, ‡

§ Sir *Richard* kept the deck till an hour before midnight, when being ſhot in the body with a muſket ball, as he was dreſſing, he received a ſecond in the head.

‖ The Surgeon was mortally wounded.

* *Linſchotten* ſays the *Engliſh* loſt 100 men, and the *Spaniards* about 400 killed and wounded.

‡ Ninety of the *Revenge*'s men lay ſick in the hold, and had no ſhare in the fight.

His ſhip diſmaſted, naked, and deſtroy'd,
Like a hulk ſhipwreck'd, heaving on the tide.
While the *Iberians* ſummon to ſubmit,
If life be dear, or ſafety valu'd yet!
Yet thus the *Chief*, § regardleſs of his wound,
Beſpeaks his *remnant* crew, aſſembling round!
'Well! have your arms, my friends, approv'd in fight,
'Aided my wiſh, and done *our country* right;
'But *Spain* by numbers vindicates the field!
'And overpow'r'd by numbers muſt we yield?
'What! ſhall we barter fleeting life for ſhame,
'Have we then fought ſo long---to loſe our fame!
'What! ſhall we ſue on dubious terms for peace,
'Or meanly purchaſe ſafety with diſgrace?
'No, let us chooſe, like Britons, free to fall,
'Let thro' our *ſhip* the *gunner* † point the ball;

Low

§ Sir *Richard* exhorted the company to yield themſelves to the mercy of God, and none elſe; and that as they had, like valiant men, repulſed ſo many enemies, they ſhould not now impair the honour of their nation by prolonging their lives a few hours, or a few days.

† The gunner conſented to ſink the ſhip.

'Low let us ſink beneath the briny wave,
'This ſhip our coffin, and the deep our grave
'Nor of our ſpoils a ſingle plank remain,
'To ſwell the arrogance of boaſting *Spain!*'

He ſpoke---but faint his purpoſe now avails,
With the few left, ‖ the love of life prevails;
They urge that not of *ſafety* quite bereft,
'*Submiſſion* timely now alone is left;
'Still might his country his devotion claim,
'Still might he live, to vindicate his fame!
'Nor could the foe a mighty triumph boaſt,
'Their ſhip diſabled and in fact was loſt!
'Soon would the ſeas the helpleſs wreck devour,
'Nor taken could ſhe reach the neareſt ſhore:'
In vain they plead! 'tis all a fruitleſs ſtrife
To reconcile the *hero* now to life;
Deaf as the ſummit of the rocky ſhore,
When tempeſts howl, or waves reſounding roar!

Greenville

‖ Was prevented by the majority of officers.

Greenville rejects their ſuit---with ſoul elate!
Studious of death, and *victor* of his fate!
Yet anxious ſtill to ſave ſo dear a life,
His *officers* † deſiſt, unbid the ſtrife!
The flag they ſtrike---accept the *offer'd grace*,
Alphonſo glad conſents to terms of peace;
A man of *worth*, whom virtue taught to know,
And honour merit, in an noble foe!
Quick he ordains---§ to bring with care aboard
The *rival*, whoſe *misfortune* he deplor'd;
But with what pangs was *Greenville*'s boſom torn?
When from his dear *Revenge* a captive borne;
His trembling limbs confeſs his inward ſmart,
Confeſs the anguiſh preys upon his heart!
'Yes bear (he cries) now bear me where you pleaſe,
'Rack thoſe weak limbs, or ſink beneath the ſeas;
'This noble privilege my ſoul ſhall claim,
'She ſmiles ſecure---you cannot wound my fame.'

So,

† Who finding Sir *Richard* ſtill inexorable. Struck the flag, and ſurrendered on conditions, to have their lives ſaved, and to be free from galley or impriſonment, till they could ranſom themſelves.

§ Don *Alphonſo de Bacon*, brother to the Marquiſs of *Santa Cruz*, the *Spaniſh* admiral, expreſſed a great concern to ſave *Greenville*, for whoſe courage he ſhewed a great eſteem; and ordered him to be convey'd aboard the *St. Paul*, his own ſhip.

So ſaid---he ſwoon'd---§ his ſenſeleſs form they bear
On board th' *Iberian Admiral*, whoſe care
Bids every help of *art* his wounds await,
Bids every aid of kindneſs ſooth his fate!
Strives to compoſe the recent rage of ſtrife,
And reconcile the *Britiſh* chief to life!
Vain toil!------his ſoul by *nature* was too brave
To think of chains, or ſtay to be a ſlave!
He ſcorn'd the bounties *conqueſt* would impart,
And each new *obligation* broke his heart!
Death that had ſpar'd---took pity on his grief
Granted his pray'r---and came to his relief!
When thus as *Nature*'s bands diſcloſing broke,
To his reſpectful foes the *Hero* ſpoke;
'Calmly behold me yield this vital breath,
'Once overcome;------I dread no ſecond death,
'For *England*'s glory, dearer than my life,
'For the *Queen*'s fame, I bore the deadly ſtrife,
'Now with content I cloſe the mortal ſcen
'While no diſhonour can my conduct ſtai

She

§ Sir *Richard*, at leaving his ſhip, loſt his ſenſes, tho' all care was taken of his wounds.

'Shed in my country's cauſe my deareſt blood,
'I die with honour------ſo a ſoldier ſhou'd.'

He ſaid, || his falt'ring tongue could add no mo
Short grew his breath------and every pain was o'
The vanquiſh'd chief reſigns his martial fire,
And e'en in death his foes his *worth* admire.

Alphonſo, to diſplay his juſt regard
To *Virtue*, * ſees each ſolemn rite prepar'd.
Deep round the windings of the rocky ſhore,
His cannons ſound the worth he dreads no more.
Then to the boſom of the ambient wave
They *Greenville*'s form intruſt, to find a grave!
A worthy tomb!---for wide as winds can blow,
Or with thoſe winds the rolling billows flow;
So wide thro' earth ſhall *Greenville*'s honour ſpread,
Preſerv'd by time, from dark oblivion's ſhade!

|| He died the ſecond or third day after he was taken.

* He was bury'd in the ſea, with all funeral honours and marks of reſpect the *Spaniſh* admiral could ſhew.

F I N I S.